
**HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD
STAFF REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION**

Property Address:	1322 9th Street NW	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Agenda
Landmark/District:	Blagden Alley – Naylor Court Historic District	<input type="checkbox"/> Consent Calendar
ANC:	2F	<input type="checkbox"/> Denial Calendar
		<input type="checkbox"/> Concept Review
Meeting Date:	January 24, 2013	<input type="checkbox"/> Alteration
H.P.A. Number:	#13-091	<input type="checkbox"/> New Construction
Staff Reviewer:	Brendan Meyer	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Raze
		<input type="checkbox"/> Subdivision

Owner, Bernard and Vera Ehrlich, seek permit to raze an accessory structure at 1322 9th Street NW which contributes to the character of the Blagden Alley-Naylor Court Historic District. The structural condition report was prepared Swanke Hayden Connell Architects.

Property Description and Context

Blagden Alley – Naylor Court Historic District was designated as a historic district in 1990 as a notable collection of alley buildings including alley dwellings, stables, garages, warehouses, and other light industrial buildings.

The existing structure at 1322 9th Street NW is the only structure on the lot, the primary structure having been demolished before creation of the historic district in 1990. It faces onto Naylor Court at the rear property line. At present it has two vehicle doors on the Naylor Court face, a side elevation on the north with a “butterfly” roof, an altered west elevation and an attached elevation on the south. The butterfly roof is evidence of the two major building phases of the structure, each phase pitching its roof to the center of the structure.

The west half of the structure was a stable probably constructed in the 1860s. Because building records are rare for period, this date is an estimate based on map research and construction methods. The headers for the vehicle doors are monolithic timber beams with adze marks which indicate the beam was shaped from a round log into a squared beam by hand, possible on site. Another indication of mid-19th century construction are the original roof rafters which run 16 feet long and are “bird-mouthed” and notched into place on the walls top plate. The stable was likely part of a row of stables, those to the north now gone, but it cannot be determined if the row was constructed as one or separately.

The east half of the structure was to garage or repair automobiles and probably constructed c. 1920 based on construction method. Headers and floors are constructed out of reinforced concrete which did not get widely used until World War I. Also, the roof rafters have cross-bracing which is a type of code construction required in the early 20th century. A room on the east end of the structure of indeterminate size and purpose is no longer extant.

The property is in a severe state of disrepair. The raze application is in response to the District seeking to designate the property as blighted due to its disrepair. The west wall of the stable on Naylor Court and the stable roof are in the most stable condition. The north wall of the stable is not toothed into the west wall and is separating away from the structure. This wall is likely not original, judging by its sloppy workmanship. It was likely erected when the neighboring structure was torn down and exposed the interior of 1322. The original rear wall of the stable which is now enclosed was mostly removed when the 20th century addition was built. With the original wall gone, the stable roof rafters are now beared by an I-beam notched into the remnant wall and supported at the center by a metal lolly-column.

The east wall, originally an interior wall of the 20th century garage, is in stable condition with some loss of brick at the parapet. The garage roof is a total loss with gaping holes through the original roof rafters and plywood roof sheathing which was probably installed as a modern repair to the original roof.

Mortar is in poor condition generally, but especially in the 19th century section, and requires repointing. A small paulownia tree has taken root in the north wall and its root growth between the wythes of brick has exploded the mortar joints from within as the roots have matured and expanded.

The foundation and footers are of indeterminate size and condition. There is no visual structural distress where the building meets the ground. The butterfly roof continues to shed water to the center of the roof plate where a downspout (once on the outside, now on the inside) carries water to an original storm water drain.

Applicant's Condition Report

A condition report of the building was performed by Swanke Hayden Connell Architects. Although not an engineering firm, SHCA has extensive experience with historic buildings including preservation projects for St. Paul's Parish in Foggy Bottom, Engine Company 25 in Congress Heights, and Decatur House on Jackson Square.

The condition report is a general description of the building's construction method and condition, illustrated with photographs. The report gives a general recommendation that the building cannot be restored and that total reconstruction is the reasonable option. Options to restore building components and structural defects are not offered.

Evaluation

Staff is extremely distressed that the owner has let the building fall into such a total state of disrepair. Despite this the building stands. While the condition report concludes with a statement that the structure is so unstable that SHCA is surprised it survived last summer's earthquake, the fact remains that it did survive the earthquake. That alone may be sufficient evidence for the building's structural integrity.

The most distressed sections of the building—the west half of the north wall, the 20th century roof in the eastern half, and the interior I-beam bearing the weight of both roofs—are not original fabric. Their complete replacement would not reduce the building's current historic integrity and would improve its structural integrity. The repointing that is recommended is part of a normal maintenance cycle for masonry construction which requires repointing every 75-100 year.

As a composition reflecting two distinct eras that are both directly related to the historic district's character as an alley landscape of stables, garages and other utilitarian building types, Staff recommends that the Board affirm that the building's current status as a contributing building in Blagden Alley-Naylor Court Historic District.

Recommendation

The staff recommends that the Board

- 1) *Affirm that the stable/garage at 1322 9th Street NW contributes to the character of the Blagden Alley-Naylor Court Historic District, and*
- 2) *Recommend to the Mayor's Agent that the raze application be denied as inconsistent with the purposes of the historic preservation law.*